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Hawley - Common Schools, 1819

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INSTRUCTIONS
FOR THE
BETTER GOVERNMENT
AND
ORGANIZATION
OF
COMMON SCHOOLS.

**PREPARED AND PUBLISHED PURSUANT TO A
PROVISION IN THE ACT FOR THE SUPPORT
OF COMMON SCHOOLS, PASSED
APRIL 12th, 1819.**

Richard Hart

ALBANY:

PRINTED BY WEBSTER AND SKINNER,

at their Bookstore in the Public Square, corner of State and Pearl Streets.

1819.

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DIRECTION.

THE Town Clerk, on receiving copies of the following Instructions, will please to retain one in his office as Clerk of the Commissioners of Common Schools, and distribute the others among the Clerks of School Districts, and the Inspectors of Schools in his Town.

The District Clerk, on receiving a copy of these Instructions, will please to retain it as one of the books belonging to his office, for the special use of the Trustees and Teachers of his District, to be delivered over by him to his successor in office.

GIDEON HAWLEY,

Superintendent of Common Schools

ALBANY, December, 1849.

Erratum.

In the 18th section of the Act for the support of Common Schools, as published the Superintendent, and in the third line from the beginning of the section, for "two" read *three*.—As the act has been published, it would appear that *two* inspectors may examine teachers, and certify as to their qualification; but by the act as passed, three are made necessary. If the inspectors have been misled by this error in the copy of the act as published, and only two of them have in consequence attended on the examination of teachers, their proceedings ought not, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, to be considered irregular, or their certificate of approbation insufficient.

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CIRCULAR.

In preparing suitable instructions for the better government and organization of Common Schools, the Superintendent is very sensible of the great importance of the trust committed to his charge, and the responsibility incurred in executing it. From the great diversity of opinion, on the subject of education, he is also sensible of the difficulty in prescribing a system of instruction for schools, which shall be equally acceptable to all for whom it is intended. He however trusts that in all matters within his province his advice will be well received; and he indulges the hope, that his efforts to improve the condition of schools will not be wholly ineffectual.

In organizing common schools, two distinct subjects naturally present themselves for consideration; the course of study, and mode of instruction.

In every common school the course of study to be pursued must necessarily embrace *reading, writing and arithmetic*. These are the first rudiments of education; and to instruct in them is the peculiar province of a common school, and the first object of its institution. Where any of these elementary parts of education cannot be taught, from inability in the teacher to instruct in them, or where any of them are excluded from an idea of their unimportance; the primary requisites of a common school are wanting; and the privileges of such a school, contemplated by the school act, cannot be claimed nor ought they to be enjoyed. Reading, writing and arithmetic, as they are the means of acquiring all subsequent knowledge, may justly be considered the necessities of education, which, like the necessities of life, are first to be secured. Nothing short of these will constitute a common school, or satisfy the lowest requisites of the school act. And in a liberal view of that act, and especially in consideration of the great benefits to be derived from it, the course of study in common schools should extend beyond these inferior limits, and embrace the various branches of useful knowledge which constitute a good common education.

In this country, where children have much time to spend at school, and their parents very generally the ability to support them there, especially with the aid of the public fund set apart for that purpose, there is an obvious propriety in requiring common schools to embrace a more extended course of instruction, than under other circumstances it would be proper to require, or reasonable to expect. The propriety of this is still more forcibly impressed on us, from the consideration that our common schools are the only channels for the general diffusion of useful knowledge. Academies are too few in number to subserve the purposes of general education; and their design is not so much to instruct in that kind of knowledge, which constitutes a common education, as in the higher branches of classical attainment. The common school, established in every neighborhood, and within the reach of every family, is the great source of useful knowledge, not only to the people at large, but to a great majority of their legislators, and almost all their subordinate officers. Education is here always first begun, and in most cases is here also terminated. In proportion to the advantages here enjoyed by youth, will probably be their value as private citizens; their usefulness in public life; and the prosperity and moral character of the country whose government they are to assume and laws administer. It is in consideration of these circumstances, and to enable our youth to receive such an education as would fit them for the various stations in life, which in manhood they might be called, that a fund was constituted for the support of common schools, yielding a perpetual revenue sufficient to defray nearly one third of the expense of common schools.

for the whole state. And it was contemplated that by this act of public bounty, this great end would be secured—a good common education to every child in the state.

It is, therefore, enjoined on every common school, as a duty growing out of its acceptance of the public bounty, to adopt, and practically pursue, a course of instruction, as liberal and comprehensive as its circumstances will warrant. In addition to the first rudiments of education, which have been already enumerated, and which as they are the means of acquiring and using all other knowledge, are first to be secured; the course of study, in every well organized common school, ought to embrace English grammar, geography, surveying, the history of our own country, its constitution and form of government, the crimes and punishments which form our criminal code, and such parts of our civil jurisprudence as every man, in his daily intercourse with the world, is concerned to know. It is not expected that the whole course of study here recommended, will be immediately adopted in every school. The want of suitable school books, together with other causes, may and probably will, prevent many schools from introducing at once, all, or even the greater part of the studies here enumerated. But it is expected that every school, which receives the public bounty, and whose course of study falls short of the limits here prescribed, will immediately adopt as much of the plan, here proposed, and pursue it as thoroughly, as, from its condition and circumstances, it shall be enabled.

It cannot be objected to the course of study here prescribed, that it embraces subjects of minor importance. Whatever may be thought of the practicability of introducing into common schools the different studies here enumerated, on their utility, and importance to youth, there ought not to be a diversity of opinion. Of English grammar, which is one of the studies recommended, it might be sufficient to observe, that it has been admitted in all well regulated common schools, ever since it became a science. But independent of immemorial usage, the utility of grammar, as a study for youth, is apparent from the consideration that it treats of the nature and proper use of language, and that the study of it is one of the best exercises to strengthen the judgment, at the same time that it improves the memory. To understand the natural force of language, and to be able to use it definitely ourselves, or to construe it definitely when used by others, it is necessary to have at least a general knowledge of its grammatical construction. Such a knowledge, it is true, may be acquired from practice, without the aid of elaborate and artificial rules: and probably most persons, in the use of language, are more indebted to this source of knowledge, than to any artificial system of grammar. But true as this may be, it is no less true, that practice is aided by theory. It is with language as with all other acquirements—practice is the best source of knowledge, and the one most commonly relied on. But theory is not therefore to be neglected. It is still considered a necessary aid to practice, by unfolding and explaining its principles, and rendering its knowledge more rational and perfect. A man accustomed to analyze language, by applying to it the rules of grammar, and testing its correctness according to that standard, will, from that operation alone, be better able to understand the natural force and meaning of language, and be more likely to use it definitely both in speaking and writing. If the knowledge, derived from such exercise, should be more generally diffused, our language would be less liable to change, and there would probably be less of that obscurity and imperfection in contracts, and other private acts of individuals, which is now so common a source of litigation.

Geography is recommended as a suitable study for common schools, because the knowledge of it is useful in itself, while its study is peculiarly adapted to the capacities of children, and calculated, more perhaps than any other, to engage their attention. Youth is the proper season for all studies depending chiefly on the memory; as well because that faculty is then more mature than any other, as that impressions then made on it are more durable. Geography consisting for the most part of particular and independent facts, not requiring in its study the exercise of any other faculty than that of memory, and requiring the exercise of that faculty in its fullest extent, there is a peculiar propriety in making it a leading object of study in common schools. Its influence also on the minds of children, by enlarging their ideas of things, and carrying their thoughts beyond the narrow sphere in which they live, is another consideration not less favourable to the early cultivation of this important science.

In regard to surveying, it can hardly be necessary to enlarge on its utility as a study for common schools. In a country so purely agricultural as ours, where almost every man has occasion to apply in practice the principles of surveying, some general knowledge of the art is important both for his interest and convenience. He ought to understand, at least in theory, the nature and the use of the compass; the measurement of land by courses and distances; and the computation of areas on the most approved methods. But obvious as is the necessity of some general knowledge on this subject, most men are found deficient in it; and the reason probably is, that they have not been taught it at school. The neglect of this branch of instruction in common schools is probably owing to a supposed difficulty in the subject, and a want of suitable instruments to illustrate and apply its principles. But as to any real difficulty, it is far less than in many of the abstruse parts of arithmetic, in which the greatest progress is often made at school; and it would certainly be a profitable change to transfer the time now spent, or rather mispent, on the abstruse and speculative parts of arithmetic, to this practical and useful study. Less time and labour than are now required, to understand a few puzzling rules or problems in arithmetic, would be sufficient to overcome all the difficulties in the art of surveying; and at the same time much greater improvement would be afforded to the mind of the pupil. It is not here intended to disparage the study of arithmetic, in its elementary and practical parts; within these limits it is considered one of the first rudiments of education, and not to be dispensed with for any other branches of knowledge, except those of reading and writing. It is only that part of arithmetic, which has no connection with the common concerns of life, and which cannot, therefore, observe any useful purpose, that is here considered of so little value. A practical knowledge of surveying, derived from actual experiment with the chain and compass, is not expected to be taught in common schools: a general knowledge of its principles, so as to enable the pupil to apply them to practice in after life, is all that is required, or can reasonably be expected. And as this kind of knowledge may be derived from books, without the aid of any costly apparatus, there can be no reason why it should not be taught in common schools, as well as other branches of useful knowledge: and if its relative importance be regarded, there is every reason to give it a conspicuous place in the education of

As recommending as suitable objects of study in common schools, the history of our own country, with its constitution and form of government, the superintendent has acted from a firm belief, that a knowledge

of these subjects ought to be early inculcated on the minds of youth, and made a necessary part of education. In other countries, under other forms of government, the general diffusion of such knowledge, if not considered dangerous, would probably be viewed with indifference. In our own country, where the people are entrusted with the government of themselves, a knowledge of the constitution and form of government, under which they live, is necessary to enable them to govern with wisdom, and to appreciate the blessings of their free and happy condition. Nor is the knowledge of their own history less important. By enabling them to trace the rise and progress of their civil liberties, and to realize the immense sacrifices made in acquiring them; it cannot fail to impress them with a due sense of the great privileges they enjoy, and to endear and perpetuate the institutions, under which those privileges are held. Such knowledge, so salutary in its influence, ought to be early inculcated on the minds of youth, and made a necessary part of their elementary education. If it be taught to them in childhood, while their habits and affections are forming, and their mind is gradually taking its cast, the impression will be deep and identified with their existence; whereas if it be left to them in after years, to acquire the knowledge, and they have then sufficient curiosity to seek for it, the impression to be received, although at first sufficiently strong, will in its duration be comparatively transient.

In recommending the study of our criminal code, so far as it relates to the nature and definition of public offences and the extent of punishments, the superintendent is aware that he is introducing into schools a new branch of study. But he is confident the innovation will not be thought useless, or impolitic, when it is considered, how much it concerns every man to know what acts are criminal in law, and what measure of punishment is provided for them; and when it is also considered, how many acts are made criminal in the statute book, which, not being so independent of positive regulation, are to be learnt only by study and research. It cannot have escaped the most common observation, that offences, made such by positive statute, are often committed through ignorance of the law; and that the guilt of acts, in themselves criminal, is sometimes incurred through ignorance of the full extent of their criminality. Ignorance of law is no excuse for its transgression. And while this is recognized as a fundamental principle, no man can be safe, without some knowledge of the law, for the transgression of which he is so unconditionally answerable. The influence, also, which such knowledge has on the mind, is another consideration not less favourable to its early cultivation. If a knowledge of the nature of crimes and punishments, be early inculcated on the minds of children, their abhorrence of criminal acts cannot fail to be more deeply impressed; and the probability of their committing them proportionably diminished.

As to making our civil jurisprudence the object of study in common schools, it is proper to observe, that it is not intended to recommend the study of law generally; but of such particular parts only, as every man of business must know, and which, if he does not learn at school, he must learn elsewhere. A knowledge, for example, of what contracts should be in writing; of what solemnities are required in wills and other instruments; of what consideration is necessary, in certain agreements; and of such other parts of law, as are of like applicability to the common concerns of life, is of such obvious importance, that it cannot be necessary to urge any arguments in its favour. It is considered as

an object of study for the elder classes of boys in common schools.

and it is hoped, that when suitable books are provided, it will receive a degree of attention corresponding with its merits.

It may, perhaps, be objected to the course of study here prescribed, that it will require more time than children ordinarily have to spend at school. In anticipation of such an objection, it may be observed, that most children spend the greater part of their time at school, between the ages of five and fifteen years : a length of time much greater than is spent in acquiring any of the common arts or professions of life ; and abundantly sufficient, with ordinary diligence, to complete a course of study even more comprehensive than is here prescribed. It is well known, that children of ordinary capacity, who apply their time at school with diligence and economy, are enabled to complete a common course of study in much less time than is allotted to them for the purpose. Instances are not rare, of children having gone through with the various branches of study, commonly taught at school, before they attain the age of ten or twelve years. If, therefore, the course of study here prescribed fail of being completed at school, it will not be so much for want of time, as of due economy in using it : And as this latter cause of failure may be so easily removed, it is hoped no school will be liable to the imputation of it.

Having now explained the course of study to be pursued in common schools, it will be proper to select and recommend the most suitable books for the use of schools. In making this selection, the superintendent has himself examined and compared the different books in use, and confirmed his own opinion of their relative merits, by the opinion of others, whom he has consulted, and whose greater experience enabled them to form a better judgment. The following is a list of the books selected by him and recommended as most suitable for schools, viz :

Webster's Spelling Book.

The American Preceptor.

The English Reader.

Beauties of the Bible—by Ezra Sampson.

Brief Remarker—by the same.

Walker's Dictionary.

Daboll's Arithmetic.

Murray's English Grammar—(new Abridgment.)

Morse's Geography—(new Abridgment with Atlas.

Flint's Surveying.

Historical Dictionary—by Ezra Sampson.

Of Webster's Spelling Book, it may be observed, that it was among the first books of the kind ever published in this country ; and that it is now of longer standing, and in much more general use than any other. It has superseded all foreign books of the same kind, and is probably now in use in nine tenths of the schools in this country. It may therefore be considered, as it is emphatically called, "The American Spelling Book." Independent of these circumstances, which, of themselves, constitute a strong claim to public notice, it is considered a book of intrinsic merit ; and without making any invidious comparison with other books of the same kind, it is believed to be worthy of the reputation it has acquired ; and is recommended as decidedly the best book of the kind now in use. If it be defective, as it probably is in some respects, it is better to revise and correct it, than to introduce a new book in its place. When a school book has got in general use, and its character is well known and established, it becomes public property ; and, unless it be intrinsically worthless, it ought not to be lightly exchanged for what is new and experimental. If it be partially defective, it is much safer to

revise and correct it, than to hazard the experiment of a new and untried work. On this principle the superintendent has acted, in most of the selections made by him; which, he trusts, will satisfactorily account for his selecting so few of the books, recently published for the use of schools, and designed to supersede others before in use. It is, however, proper to observe, that the rule here assumed, has not been, nor is it designed to be, so applied, as to exclude any new book, the intrinsic merits of which give it a decided superiority over the old one with which it claims a competition. On the contrary, such books have readily been adopted, without regard to the length of time they have been in use.—The rule, without such a qualification, would be a bar to all improvement in school books.

The American Preceptor, and English Reader, have long been used and approved, as reading books, in most of our schools. Their leading design is to interest and engage the attention of youth, and at the same time to afford the most useful instruction. They abound in good moral precepts, and contain many excellent pieces of interesting narrative. Improvement and pleasure are so closely blended together, that the natural avidity of youth for the latter, is happily made subservient to the attainment of the former. On this characteristic, the perfection of reading books for children most obviously depends. And although other books of the same kind, are not, in this respect, wholly destitute of merit, yet, as the books here selected are better known, and more generally in use, while their intrinsic merits are at least equal, they have for that reason been preferred.

The Beauties of the Bible is a selection from the old and new testament, designed particularly for the use of schools. It embraces such parts of the sacred volume, as are best calculated, by engaging the attention of youth, to impart to them the most useful instruction. The selection has been made with great judgment; and is an excellent compendium of the great moral precepts and divine truths of revelation.—The new testament has long been used as a reading book in most of our schools; and the propriety of making the whole, or select parts of it, a study for youth, after they have learnt to read from other books, and are capable of reading for improvement in knowledge, is too obvious, and too generally assented to, to require any labour to enforce it. While christianity is revered as an institution of divine origin, and its sacred precepts regarded as the best, and only sure guide to moral excellence; a knowledge of the new testament will be studiously inculcated on the minds of youth, and made a necessary part of their elementary education. The old testament has not been generally used, as a reading book, for schools; and considering that many parts of it are not suited to the capacities of children, an indiscriminate use of it would not be advisable. But there are parts of the old testament, (such, in particular, as the many beautiful and interesting narratives, so finely calculated to illustrate and enforce the moral virtues,) which may be read by youth, at school, with as much propriety, as many parts of the new testament.—The selection, here recommended, is designed to embrace such parts of both the old and new testament, as are suited to the capacities of children, and are most profitable for their instruction. For this reason, it is considered more suitable for the use of schools than either the old or new testament: and it may, as a school book, with propriety, supersede both. It should not, however, nor should either the old or new testament, be used as a book, out of which children first learn to read; as it would then be associated with all the tediousness, toil, and difficulty, which attend their first efforts, in the art of reading, are commonly attended with

should be committed to the hands of such children only, who are so far advanced in education, that they read, not so much with a view to acquire the art of reading, as to improve themselves in knowledge. It is proper to observe that the selection has been made without reference to any disputed points of doctrine ; and that it is entirely free from all sectarian spirit.

"The Brief Remarker" is a recent publication, which probably has not yet been introduced, as a reading book, in any of our schools. It is a collection of original essays, "on the social and domestic relations, and the various economy of life." Its leading object is to convey, in a familiar and easy style, the most plain and practical instruction on the common concerns of common life. Whoever is familiar with the essays of our best authors on the same subjects, will find in this book, what will at least remind him of *their* peculiar excellence : he will find the same common sense, dressed in the same simple, chaste garb ; and the same original and striking views on the most common and familiar subjects. The book is addressed to the common sense of mankind, in the most simple, unaffected, yet irresistible manner. It is replete with the most pertinent and striking remarks on the daily concerns of common life ; and it contains a fund of moral instruction, which for real substantial value, is not surpassed by any production of a similar kind and equal magnitude. Such a book has long been wanted for the use of common schools, and since it has been obtained, from a hand so competent to produce whatever is most useful and excellent in such productions, it is hoped it will be introduced into general use, as a reading book for schools ; and it is not doubted, that, when it shall become generally known, its intrinsic merits will satisfy the public of the justice of the recommendation now given. As the book was not originally designed for the use of schools, it may, in order to render it more suitable for a school book, require considerable modification ; and it is understood, that the author is about to revise and correct it, with a particular view to the new character it is about to assume.

Walker's Dictionary is selected as most suitable for the use of schools, because it is in much more general use than any other ; and, by general consent, in all countries where the English language is spoken, is allowed, and taken to be the most correct standard of pronunciation. It is important, for the uniformity and perpetuity of our language, that such a standard should be generally adopted : and it is hoped, the time is not far distant, when this book, will be considered the only legitimate authority for the orthography and pronunciation of the English language.

In preferring Daboll's Arithmetic, regard has been had as well to the intrinsic merits of the book, as to the reputation, it has very generally obtained. It is better adapted to the currency of the United States than any other book of the kind ; and its rules are believed to be more simple, and better illustrated by example. As it is already in much more general use than any other system of arithmetic ; and as its merits correspond to the use it has obtained, the recommendation here given will, it is believed, secure to it a decided preference in every school.

For the English Grammar, Murray is very justly considered the standard author. The large edition of his work, together with his exercises and appendix, is undoubtedly the most complete and perfect system of English grammar ever published. It is a treatise of great merit ; and the moral sentiments, always conveyed in the illustration of its rules, are, independent of its other merits, to our warmest approbation. The large edition having been found too expensive for ordinary use in common schools, an abridgment of it was prepared by the same

which has been very generally used in most of our schools. But this being found too much abridged, particularly in the exercises intended to illustrate the general rules, a new abridgment has been recently prepared and published,* which, with the additions and illustrations it contains, is recommended as the best book on grammar that can be used in common schools.

In recommending the new abridgment of Morse's Geography, it is proper to observe, that the book is not yet published; and that the recommendation is given on assurances received from the author, "that he is preparing a new abridgment of his geography for schools, on an improved plan, to be accompanied with a new atlas; both embracing the latest improvements in geography as far as they can be comprised with perspicuity, in works of their size. The geography will be furnished with a set of questions, (to be inserted in an appendix, or at the close of the different sections of the work,) proper for the instructor to ask, and for the pupil to answer. The work will be rendered as complete, in all respects, as the author can make it. The price of the book will be, as it has been, a dollar; of the atlas, 75 cents to a dollar. This (the atlas) is completed, and the printing of the geography is contracted for, and will be published probably, in the course of six months."

If the book be published with the improvements here suggested, it will, together with the atlas intended to accompany it, be more suitable for schools than any other now in use. The former editions of the book have always been considered more full and complete, in relation to the country, than any other book of the same kind; and if they had been better suited for the use of common schools, by having more of the catechetical form (which the new abridgment is now to assume,) they would probably have superseded most, if not all, other books on geography now in use.

The Historical Dictionary is a book, "consisting of articles chiefly selected from natural and civil history, geography, astronomy, zoology, botany and mineralogy, arranged in alphabetical order." It is a very valuable collection of facts on the different subjects to which it relates; and it may be read by youth, with great profit, after they have completed a regular course of geography, and attained the age of ten or twelve years.

Among the books containing pieces for declamation, the *Columbian Orator* is probably most in use; but a new book, called the "*Christian Orator*," has lately been published, which, (if declamation is to be encouraged in schools,) may with great propriety, be introduced and used for that purpose.

On the history of our own country, and the remaining branches of study, included in the course before prescribed, no suitable school book have as yet been prepared. Ramsey's history of the United States is voluminous and expensive for the use of schools; and no other is known which is not liable to the same or greater objection. It is hoped an abridgment of Ramsey's history will soon be prepared, together with a suitable book on the constitution and form of government, the criminal code, and such parts of our civil jurisprudence as shall be deemed proper for the study of youth.

Uniformity in the use of school books, is most desirable, and is probably so, from the circumstance of teachers being frequently changed in schools. Without some general school regulations, or authority, every new teacher will introduce his own favorite books; and it, as will commonly be the case, will thus be

* Published by Hurd and Knapp, New York.

books used by his predecessor, it will necessarily interrupt the progress of children in the course of study commenced by them ; and will moreover subject their parents to the additional expense of new books. All this inconvenience may be effectually prevented by using the same books in different schools. The price of books, also, may, it is believed, by the same means, be made cheaper. Booksellers can certainly afford school books much cheaper, when the use of them is uniform. They can then calculate, with more certainty, on the extent of the demand which will be made for any particular book ; and will not be subject to the hazard, they now run, of its being thrown out of use, and left dead on their hands, from the frequent changes in the public choice. And although, by increasing the demand for any particular book, the price of it is commonly enhanced, yet, it is believed, the natural tendency in such cases, will in this case, be sufficiently counteracted, by concentrating and increasing the competition of booksellers on the books selected.

It is hoped that teachers, seeing the importance of uniformity in the use of school books, will so far forego their own opinion, where it may be adverse to the recommendation here given, as to adopt and use, as far as shall be practicable, the books here selected. As an additional inducement to that desirable end, it is stated, as a matter of fact, derived from the returns made to the superintendent, from different counties in the state, that the books here selected, (except such as are stated to be new,) are already in much more general use than any other.

It now remains, to give some general advice and direction, on the mode of instruction to be adopted in common schools. As much of the progress of children at school depends on the manner in which they are taught, and as it is important that the mode of instruction, to be adopted, should be uniform in all our schools, it would be proper, if the limits of this address would permit, to enter fully in detail on this subject. But this not being practicable, within the narrow limits at present prescribed, must be reserved for some future occasion. All that can now be expected, will be some general instructions, preparatory to a more specific plan hereafter to be submitted.

In the instruction of youth, the first object of a teacher should be to make study a voluntary and agreeable employment. Children are naturally averse to all serious occupation, and, if left to themselves, will seek every opportunity to lay aside their study for play. Not perceiving any immediate benefit in the pursuit of knowledge, and not being able to appreciate the ultimate benefit to be derived from it, they are naturally impatient under the labour it imposes. To overcome this impatience, and to make study voluntary, either from habit or choice, is obviously, a preliminary step in education. Until this point be gained, little or no progress in knowledge can be expected. Unwilling study is always languid ; and the impression, received from it, necessarily transient. There is no part of a teacher's duty more important than that of training the minds of youth to early habits of attention, and making study a voluntary and agreeable employment. This preliminary point being gained, the greatest difficulty in education is overcome ; the pupil will thenceforth pursue knowledge of his own accord, and having within himself a sufficient motive for study, his teacher need no longer fear the disagreeable necessity of compulsion. To render the instruction and the study of the pupil should be adapted to his powers, and his task limited to what he can easily perform, should be the constant aim of the teacher. He should be assisted in his progress by the judicious attention of his teacher, and his emulation should be excited by contending with others in the same pursuit. These are the leading means, by which the great object here proposed, that of making study voluntary and agreeable, is to be accomplished.

In the first place, if the study of youth be not suited to their age and capacity, not only the time spent on it will be wasted, but whatever natural or preconceived aversion there may be to study, will be confirmed. Children under the age of ten or twelve years should be kept to spelling, reading, writing, and such other branches of elementary study, as depend chiefly on the memory. These are on a level with their capacities; and may be studied, with as much profit as in after years. The tables in arithmetic, together with the four simple elementary rules, may also, with great propriety, be taught to them at an early age. But the combination of rules in arithmetic, as it requires the exercise of considerable judgment, is not suited to the ordinary capacity of children in the early stages of education. It should be reserved for them, in after years, when their judgments shall have become more mature. The same remark will apply with equal force to English grammar; as it is a study which, when rightly pursued, involves the analysis of language, and requires more thought and reflection, than children, under the age of ten or twelve years, are capable of. Memory, it is true, is employed in committing the rules and definitions of grammar; and as far as that faculty is concerned, children at a very early age are competent to the study; but the application of those rules, in the exercise of parsing, which is the most difficult and important part of grammar, is the peculiar province of judgment.

To induce children to apply themselves willingly to study, it is, in the next place, important, that in whatever they engage, a definite task, limited to what they can easily perform, should always be assigned to them. This may not, at first view, be thought deserving of the importance which is here ascribed to it; but a little reflection will present it in a different light. A child, who when entering on his study, has a given task before him, knows or can calculate with certainty, when his labours will be ended. He sees that it depends upon himself, whether he is to be sooner or later liberated.— This circumstance, more perhaps than any other, alleviates the burden of his study, and animates him to greater exertion. On the other hand, without a given task before him, he sees no other termination to his labours, than the uncertain will and pleasure of his teacher. In this state of uncertainty, he naturally becomes impatient; and associating study with his restlessness of mind, he contracts an unwillingness, if not a dislike for it. Nothing tends more to cheer and alleviate labour, than the prospect of a certain end in view. It relieves the mind from that wearisome state of uncertainty, which makes time seem longer than it really is. This principle, the influence of which is more especially observable in childhood, may, if rightly applied, be subservient to the most important purposes of education; while, if it be neglected, it will probably defeat plans of instruction, which, in other respects, may be the best that can be devised.

In making study a voluntary and agreeable employment to youth, much also will depend on the character and conduct of the teacher. Children naturally associate study with the circumstances under which they pursue it; and no circumstance is more important, in their view, than the treatment which they receive from their teacher. If that be mild, conciliatory and impartial, it will naturally attach them to study, inspire them with sufficient confidence in themselves, and at the same time increase, rather than diminish, the deference and respect for their teacher which they ought always to feel for him. True deference and respect are always associated with friendly feeling. Without that support they degenerate into servile fear. Harshness and severity of treatment, should only be resorted to as a punishment for offences. For any other purpose, they will not only be subversive of their own ends, but will alienate the affections of the pupil from his teacher, and confirm, instead of removing, whatever natural, or preconceived aversion there may be to study. The ordinary deportment of a teacher towards his pupil, should be that of a parent towards his child; and indeed, for the purposes of education, a teacher stands in the relation of a parent to his pupil; he has the same power and authority over him; and is bound to the same kind offices and duties. He should be at all times accessible, and ready and willing to assist the pupil, in removing the difficulties which he finds in his way. It is true a child should not be accustomed to apply for aid on every trifling difficulty, as that would always prevent the exertion of his own strength: but there is more danger on the other hand, of his contracting a dislike to study, from being too often denied assistance when he thinks he needs it. Of the two extremes, the latter is to be most studiously avoided in the early stages of education: and the former, when children become more established in habits of study.

The influence which a teacher may, by proper management, acquire over his pupil, is very great. There is no other relation in society except that of parent and child, so favourable to influence, on the one hand, and submission on the other. Children readily yield to a teacher, whom they love, what they would obstinately withhold from every body else. To please him they will cheerfully undertake the most difficult labours, and submit, without a murmur, to the greatest privations. To cultivate this influence, which so naturally belongs to the relation of master and scholar, and to apply it prac-

tically to the purposes of education, is one of the most important parts of a teacher's duty. If he succeed, in this one particular, the other duties of his office will seem to follow of themselves; and his task, which before was a burden, will become an agreeable occupation.

But the most effectual means of making study a voluntary and agreeable employment, is by raising and keeping up, the emulation of the pupil. Emulation in childhood, supplies all the motives to action, which interest and emulation do, in manhood. It is a principle implanted in the youthful mind, apparently for the purposes of improvement: but whatever be its design, it is certain, that there is no other principle, which can be made more subservient to the purposes of education. The utility and necessity of knowledge, may indeed be urged as motives of study; but their influence will rarely be effectual. The great benefits of knowledge, being realised only in manhood, are too distant, and too indistinctly seen, to actuate a child in his youthful pursuits. He looks for something nearer; some present good to reward his daily toils.—Distant objects, although distinctly seen by him, lose their value, in the long lapse of years, before he can attain them. But this defect, if indeed it may be called so, is happily supplied by emulation. To excel others in the same pursuit, is itself a present good; it secures the immediate approbation of the teacher, and gratifies the natural love of praise in the pupil. In short, it furnishes a child with the same motives to study as if he were at once to realise the actual benefits of knowledge, as they will be appreciated and enjoyed by him in after life. To excite and keep alive this principle of action, and to apply it to the purposes of education, should, therefore, be a leading object in every school. In effecting this great end, it is necessary, in the first place, that the school should be divided into classes; each class containing all the scholars, who are of the same proficiency, and engaged in the same pursuits. It is only by classifying children according to their proficiency and pursuits, that they can be compared together, and their relative merits distinguished. Solitary study should never be allowed; it affords no opportunity for comparison, and consequently there can be no emulation. The great advantage of a public over a private school, consists in the opportunity, afforded by the former of classifying children, and comparing them with each other. The principle of classification, therefore, is of the utmost importance in all public schools, and indeed it is the basis of every plan of instruction, which aims to excite the emulation of scholars. When children are properly arranged in their several classes, they should be kept, as much as possible, in comparison with each other. Under the present system of instruction, pursued in our schools, the only opportunity for such comparison is at recitation. But under the new, or Lancasterian system, the opportunity for comparison is much greater, extending, as well to the study as to the recitation of the lesson; or rather, making but one business of both study and recitation. And it is this circumstance more perhaps, than any other, which constitutes the peculiar excellence of that celebrated system. In this respect, the established system of instruction must be acknowledged inferior: but its defects may, in some measure, be supplied by a more strict attention to the comparison of scholars with each other, when engaged in recitation. But whatever be the comparison, which children undergo with each other, it is essential to the great end in view, that of exciting emulation, that each one be rewarded according to his merits. There must be a peculiar mark of excellence, to distinguish the higher from the lower, and the middling from the lowest. Rewards, such as children value at school, are cheap and easily obtained: It is not so much intrinsic worth that they require, in a badge, as the evidence it carries of their merit. The natural and most obvious mode of reward, is by taking precedence or place of each other in their class, according to their relative merits. This simple, but to them important distinction, should never be admitted; and in addition to it, certificates of approbation should be given by the teacher, to be shewn to parents and friends, and preserved as memorials of merit.—Such rewards as these, every teacher has within his power, and if he be disposed to perform his duty, he will not fail to resort to them on all occasions. It would also be worth the expense, although it can hardly be expected that teachers will incur them on their own account, to offer, as rewards for extraordinary merit, a favourite book, or other present of esteemed value. If the trustees of school districts, should make it a condition of the contract with their teacher, that he should expend, out of his salary, a small sum, not exceeding two or three dollars a quarter, in purchasing some of the best books or other presents, to be distributed as rewards to the best scholars, it would be a valuable example in the school act would be violated; and although the wages of teachers would probably on that account, be so much the higher, there cannot be a doubt that the same results would be made for the extra expense.

Another mode of raising the emulation of youth, by giving them clear and distinct ideas of the utility and necessity of knowledge, and by applying them to a practical application of their knowledge, is the mode of instruction to be adopted in schools, of not less importance than that of making study voluntary and agreeable. Knowledge is lasting, in

proportion as it is the result of thought and reflection ; proceeding from that source, it takes a strong hold on the mind of the learner, and becomes as it were identified with his existence. While its value, is clearly in proportion to the facility and command, which the learner has, in applying it to its practical purposes. The first object of instruction, therefore, should be to present, in a clear and distinct light, whatever is to be learnt, and to address it directly to the understanding of the learner ; and, in the next place, when knowledge is acquired, it should be made available to the possessor, by learning to apply it to its practical purposes.

There is, it is apprehended, in this respect, a radical defect in the education of most children. They are not made to study understandingly ; and to apply what they learn to practice : their knowledge is too apt to be mechanical ; a mere matter of rote, lodged only in the memory. To remedy this particular defect, in the common mode of education, is the chief object of what is called the, " Pestalozzian method, which consists in exercising the reasoning faculties, more than is done by the ordinary plan of instruction ; and in making the process of learning much less a matter of rote. This end it effects by a banishment of all books from the school, and an exclusive reliance upon explanation and examination in the teacher's presence." This is no doubt an extreme, which ought to be avoided : but the common method, is not less an extreme, on the other hand. In the Pestalozzian method, study is a constant exercise of the inventive faculties : being nothing else than a kind of dialogue, or extemporaneous conversation between the teacher and his pupil, suggested by the actual, or supposed presence of some real object. But in the common method, little or no exercise of invention is required : every thing is learnt from books ; and if *their* contents be well rehearsed, or the problems *they* contain solved, according to the given rules, the pupil is thought to have done his duty : as to the application of his knowledge to practice, that is seldom considered a necessary part of education, but is commonly left for him to see to himself, in after life, when he enters on the world as a man of business. In the former system, every thing depends on practice alone ; in the latter, on theory. To preserve a medium course between both extremes, by combining theory and practice together, is doubtless the perfection of education. The books, used in the common method, are necessary to secure more correct information, than can be expected, from the extemporaneous conversations of the teacher, in the Pestalozzian plan. But when the knowledge they contain, is learnt, however accurately, by the pupil, unless he can apply it to cases, as they actually occur in practice, it will avail him but little ; he will indeed have learning, but without knowing how to use it, it will be learning without value. Knowledge, and the application of it, are two distinct objects. Although they ought never to be separated, there is no such connection between them, that one, necessarily follows from the other. It is the business of education to instruct in both alike ; to combine theory and practice together, as mutual correctives of each other. To apply the general principles, here inculcated, to the different branches of study pursued in schools, as it would require more of detail than the limits at present assigned to us will permit, must be reserved for some future occasion.

It will doubtless be expected, that some general account will be given of the recent improvements in education, introduced under the name of the Lancasterian system. The remaining part of this address will therefore be devoted to that important subject.

The following summary of the leading principles of that system, has been digested and prepared from an approved manual of the British and foreign school society : which is believed to contain a more detailed account of the plan, than the original exposition published by its author.

" The whole system is founded upon a principle of order and discipline, by which the pupils, under the inspection of the master, pursue a course of mutual instruction ; those who have made the greatest progress in reading, writing and arithmetic, transmitting the knowledge which they possess, to others less advanced than themselves. These pupils have the title of monitors ; they have the right of selecting one or more assistant monitors, if the number of children entrusted to them be too large. These assistant monitors are the best writers in the class to which they belong. Thus by employing the children as teachers, in carrying forward instruction in the several classes, a single master may superintend a school of 500 or 1000 scholars.

" In the first organization of a school there must be a division into classes : those pupils being placed together whose abilities or proficiency are nearly equal, either in reading, or arithmetic. From this circumstance proceeds two different classifications : when the children are engaged in reading, the pupils of every class are placed according to their proficiency in reading ; and when they are engaged in cyphering, the pupils of each class are placed according to their proficiency in arithmetic. The consequence of this arrangement is, that the pupils of a class, of reading or arithmetic, are on a level : they have the same degree of knowledge to acquire, and the same duties to fulfil in order to qualify them for a superior class.

" In reading, the whole school is divided into 8 classes. The 1st class learn the al-

phabet—the 2d class, words and syllables of 2 letters—3d class, words and syllables of 3 letters—4th class, words and syllables of 4 letters—5th class, reading lessons of 1 syllable—6th class, reading lessons of 2 syllables—7th class, read the testament—8th class, read the bible, and are a selection of the best readers.

"Elementary instruction, as it respects arithmetic, has been divided into 10 classes. In each of these classes, the pupil learns a single rule of arithmetic, either simple or compound.

"In the new system, writing, in the first instance, is rather employed as a mean of instruction, than an object. The children learn to read letters, syllables, and words, by writing on their slates before they read them upon the boards or in books. Thus they learn to read and write at the same time; consequently there is no particular classification in writing.

"The time required to learn reading, writing and arithmetic, by children of a good common capacity, and about 8 years of age, need not exceed 2 years; some children have finished their studies in a much shorter time."

On the three methods employed in teaching the several branches of elementary instruction.

First—DICTATION.

The children are seated upon the forms of the school, and arranged according to the gradation of the eight reading classes. Every class is superintended by a monitor. If the class comprises two forms, the monitor chooses an assistant monitor or inspector to superintend the second form; and if his class is still larger, an additional inspector for every form, (the number of children under the care of a single monitor or assistant monitor ought not to exceed nine or ten.) The signal for beginning the exercises being given, by the monitor general, the monitors of the classes dictate the words, which the children are to write on their slates. The monitor of the 8th class, having to give out the longest word begins first, the monitor of the 7th, and so on down to the monitors of the 2d. When the monitors have each dictated six words or syllables, they inform the master by turning to him that side of the telegraph, [a small board, with the number of the class on one side and the letters E X (examined) on the other,] which presents the number of the class. The master gives a signal to the pupils to show slates, and to the monitors to inspect them. The latter first inspect the slates of the assistant monitors, or inspectors, and afterwards both inspect the slates of their respective pupils. The correction being finished, the monitors and their assistants return to their places. The former turn towards the master that side of the telegraph which shows the E X, in order to inform him that the class is examined, and ready to begin a new lesson. In the mode of dictation, here described, the word is first pronounced aloud by the monitor, who then deliberately gives out its letters and syllables, which the whole class write on their slates. There is another mode, called silent dictation, which is done without uttering the words aloud, but by pointing to the letters, which compose them, on the alphabet board. This is a recent improvement on the former method, and has been tried with success. It was first suggested by the teacher of the Lancaster school at Albany.

Second—READING FROM BOARDS.

The pupils stand in semicircles round the walls of the school room. These semicircles are composed of nine or ten children, superintended by a reading monitor, who is sometimes called draft monitor, from the circumstance of the children being drawn out in drafts. The monitor holds in his hand the lesson board, or has it suspended before him on the wall, in such a manner, as to be distinctly seen by each child. He then points out the words or sentences to be read in succession, and requires the children to read them from the board, one after the other, as he directs. The children are made to correct each other's mistakes, and always take precedence or place of each other according to merit. This secures the attention of the whole, while only one is engaged in reading from the board. It is an invaluable rule that when a child makes a mistake, and is corrected by others, he is to repeat the word or sentence, until he can do it correctly. The lessons, from which the children read or spell, are printed in large letters, upon detached sheets, the union of which forms a book for a whole school of 300, or 1000 children.

Third—INTERROGATION.

The pupils remain standing in semicircles. At a signal given by the master, the reading monitors take away the lesson boards, from the view of the children, and interrogate them on the subject of their lessons. The monitors pronounce a word, which the pupils are to spell from recollection; or read a sentence, and then question the pupil on it. In arithmetic the same proceedings take place. In this method the pupils also correct each other's mistakes, and take precedence or place according to merit.

DISCIPLINE.

The principle of discipline in this system, mutual inspection or superintendence. Accordingly it is the duty of the monitors to superintend their classes, and maintain good order. The monitors are either subordinate or general. The former undertake

the instruction of their separate classes, and maintain order among the pupils intrusted to them. The latter take no part in the instruction of classes, but maintain order throughout the school. The subordinate monitors are, 1st, monitors of classes—2d assistant or inspection monitors—3d reading monitors—4th monitors of arithmetic. General monitors are, 1st, general monitors of order—2d monitor general of reading—3d monitor general of arithmetic.

As it is the duty of the monitors of classes to teach the spelling book by dictation, they should be chosen from the best writers in the seventh or eighth class. Every class has two monitors who divide the labour between them; while one superintends the class the other continues at his studies. The number of monitors of classes is therefore sixteen.

The assistant monitors are to take part with the monitors of classes in the inspection of writing, &c. They are always chosen from the pupils of the class to which they belong, and the choice is made by the monitor. One assistant monitor is chosen for each form occupied by the same class.

The monitors for reading are to teach their pupils from the boards containing the spelling book and reading lessons; consequently they are to be chosen from the best readers in the seventh or eighth classes; each class has several reading monitors, according to the number of drafts in it.

The monitors of the arithmetical classes may be chosen from the pupils who have made the greatest progress in arithmetic in each class. For this branch of elementary instruction, is so simplified by means of keys, that a pupil, who can read, may teach the four rules of arithmetic, even if he is unacquainted with them himself.

The monitor general of order has a general superintendence over the whole school, particularly over the subordinate and other monitors.

The monitor general of reading is the best reader in the school, and his particular duty is to superintend the reading classes and their monitors.

The monitor general of arithmetic is the best scholar in arithmetic, and his province is to oversee the cyphering classes. His duties, as well as those of the monitor general of reading, are often performed by the monitor general of order.

All the monitors are responsible to the master for the good order and regularity of the several departments over which they preside.

How far this system, the leading principles of which have now been explained, can be introduced into our common country schools with advantage and propriety, remains to be considered.

It is obvious, on the slightest view of the system, that its advantages are most conspicuous in large schools; and indeed the only advantage which it was originally supposed to possess over the common method, consisted in its enabling a single teacher to superintend the education of a greater number of children at a much less expense. This important advantage it undoubtedly possesses, in as great a degree as has ever been ascribed to it; and in very large schools, especially of the charitable order, it rises above all competition with any other mode of education ever proposed. But it has also been found on a fair trial of the system, that some of its principles may be applied, with great advantage, to any school, however small may be the number of children taught in it. Such in particular is the institution of monitors, for the preservation of order, which secures to the teacher all the benefits of common informers, without any of their infamy, and such also is the principle of teaching spelling and writing together, which makes different operations of the learner subservient to each other. The association, also, of intellectual exertion, with manual operation, is another principle in the system not less important or less applicable to every school. In respect to these and some other particulars, every school ought to assume somewhat of a Lancasterian character. It is not, however, expected, nor is it certain that it would be desirable, that the system should be introduced into our common country schools in all its details. In cities or large villages, where more children can be assembled at one school than can be conveniently taught by one person on the common plan, and especially if there be many poor children to be educated, there can be no doubt of the propriety of adopting the new system in its full extent. It has already been adopted in many places, under such circumstances, with great success; and it is hoped it will be extended to other places where it is equally wanted. But where the number of children is not greater than a single teacher can instruct, (as is the case in most of our country schools,) the occasion for many parts of the system ceases to exist, and its entire adoption in such cases, cannot, therefore, be urged as necessary or advisable.

It is proper to observe, that any person, desirous to qualify himself for teaching on the Lancasterian plan, can obtain the necessary instruction, free of all expense, by attending the Lancaster schools, either in the city of Albany or New-York.—The time of attendance need not exceed six weeks or two months.

GIDEON HAWLEY, Superintendent of Common Schools.

Albany, Dec. 1812.





